

CALFED OPERATIONS COORDINATION GROUP
MEETING NOTES AND ACTION ITEMS
January 9, 2002

Announcements

Review of December 7 meeting notes

The December 7, 2001 meeting notes have not yet been posted.

Handouts

1. Update on Winter-Run Chinook Salmon and Steelhead and Spring-Run Chinook, dated January 9, 2002; Bruce Oppenheim, NMFS, and Jim White, CDFG.
2. Update on Delta Smelt and Splittail, dated January 9, 2002; Ryan Olah, USFWS.
3. CALFED OPS GROUP Operations Briefing, dated January 9, 2002; Curtis Creel, DWR.
4. The Bay Institute and Environmental Defense. December 21, 2001. Letter regarding Endangered Species Act Commitments For 2002.

SWRCB Activities

Update on SWRCB activities

- The hearing notice has been released for the Imperial Irrigation District/San Diego County Water Agency water transfer. January 23, 2002 is the date of the pre-hearing conference. Specific information can be found on our website (www.waterrights.ca.gov/Hearings). The hearing will begin in April.
- A draft EIR for the Vacaville/Fairfield Benicia water right applications has been completed as well as the letters to the Parties. Parties have until January 13, 2002, to indicate whether the document satisfies their protests. The SWRCB intends to schedule a hearing on this matter to resolve the remaining issues.
- A workshop on Phase 8 of the Bay/Delta Water Rights Hearing is planned for March 2002. At that time, parties to the Phase 8 Settlement Agreement will present a progress report to the Board. The report is required by Order WR 2001-05.

Work Group Activities

OFF and DAT Update

There were few occasions when both the OFF and DAT calls were combined. Tools to augment water was discussed on the last OFF call (which was after the December 7, 2001 CALFED Ops meeting). Two most prominent tools identified as important are the Intertie and forecasting combined with a better use of San Luis Reservoir storage. The interaction between b(2) and EWA was also mentioned as important.

There were several DAT calls. A water quality issue occurred in late November/early December.

Between January 5th and 9th, 2002, an export curtailment occurred due to an increase in Delta Smelt density and Chinook salvage.

Fishery Status

Status of Sacramento River Monitoring

Sampling at GCID was difficult due to debris. At Knights Landing, a decrease in the number of winter-run size and older salmon caught was observed.

Steelhead, Winter-Run and Spring-Run Chinook Salmon

A loss of 1,609 winter run Chinook salmon occurred at both facilities. This year's loss is higher than last year's, but lower than the anticipated yellow light. The daily salvage fluctuated between zero per day to 290 per day. The January 2002 export curtailment benefited the salmon. On December 31, 2001 and January 3, 2002, there were high takes of 290 and 260, respectively, of winter-run size Chinook salmon. Between those dates mentioned earlier, the take number decreased. The fish are moving downstream earlier this year. The Sacramento Catch Index calculated an index over 10 for two days. A few older Chinook salmon were caught in the trawls. There were zero winter-run salmon caught in the last four days. The number of juvenile salmon in the Yolo Bypass has spread out. It is thought there will not be a winter-run problem like last year. The numbers caught at Red Bluff are higher this year than last year.

There aren't any adult steelheads at the hatchery. However, the juvenile steelheads are being released from the hatchery.

The cumulative loss rate of juvenile spring run was calculated as .86%. Red light is at 1%. Releases of late-fall juvenile from the Coleman National Fish Hatchery occurred at Battle Creek.

The CDFG mentioned that preliminary numbers for spawning are high in the American River, even though the flow is low. Pre-spawning mortality had occurred earlier in October and November. The number of fish (100,000) returning last year for spawning was better than this year. The reason why last year's numbers are better than this year needs to be determined. This will be a discussion in a future CALFED Ops meeting (March/April/May).

Two groups of CWT were released for the Delta Action 8 program at Georgiana Slough Sacramento River at Ryde. Exports were high for the two days after they were released and then exports were reduced for a curtailment. The value of the data recovered is unknown.

Splittail/Delta Smelt

A total of 735 splittail (pre-spawning size) were caught through January 7, 2002. Zero was caught on January 4, 2002.

Delta smelt are in the system and are attracted to the San Joaquin flow. The density of smelt increased at the SWP facilities. The density decreased when the exports were reduced from 8,500 cfs to 1,500 cfs. A question arose regarding the take limits during an above normal and below normal year for delta smelt. It was mentioned that they are based on a 90% hydrology. The cumulative salvage is 3,513 for a below normal year.

It will take two weeks to get all the sites sampled to determine the distribution through the Delta. Sampling was started in the south (San Joaquin) and will move north.

Operations Status

CVP/SWP Operations Status

DWR completed the January snow survey and the estimated hydrology for the season. The 99% exceedence hydrology is wetter than December's 90% exceedence hydrology. If the rest of the year is dry, then dry conditions could exist. There is a 75% to 85% chance to have a normal year. There is less than 1 MAF of flood control space in Oroville. Feather River flow is at 1,200 cfs. The flow into Clifton Court Forebay will be held at 1,500 cfs for the current export curtailment.

Tracy Pumping Plant is exporting between 4,000 cfs and 4,100 cfs. The federal share of San Luis Reservoir is 763 thousand acre-feet (TAF).

The state share of San Luis Reservoir is projected to physical fill by the second week of February. However, if not for the curtailment at the SWP, then the state share would have been full at least five days earlier. The federal share of San Luis Reservoir is projected to physical fill by early February.

The Delta Cross Channel gates were closed on January 4, 2002 for both fishery and flow reasons. On December 6, 2001, excess conditions were declared.

Storms have hit the Trinity/Shasta area. The storage in Shasta is 60 TAF below the flood control curve. On January 2, 2002, Spring Creek spilled from the spillway. Therefore, Shasta released about 11,000 cfs to dilute the flow. Since there isn't any additional flow going over Spring Creek's spillway, the releases from Shasta will be decreased. Inflows to Shasta peaked around 80,000 cfs. The daily average is about 56,700 cfs.

Inflow to Folsom peaked around 15,000 cfs and is now decreasing. The storage in Folsom is 180 TAF below the flood control curve. New Melones' release is 300 cfs and not 225 cfs as shown on the Stanislaus River.

The amount of reset for Shasta at the end of December is small. It will be known by the January 11, 2002 B2 IT meeting. Since the base case and the actual case coincided, there weren't any b(2) costs. Folsom has used a larger amount of b(2) water.

Delta Operations Criteria

The 7-day running average EC at Port Chicago was 2.5. The 14-day running average EC measured 4 and was dropping. The Chipps Island/X2 standard was triggered for February between 10 and 14 days with a flow at 29,200 cfs. A higher outflow of 6,000 cfs was required for January (instead of the required minimum outflow of 4,500 cfs) due to December's 8RI was greater than 800 cfs. The export to inflow (E/I) ratio reduces to 35% from 65% in February. The E/I ratio is 35% between February and June, and 65% between July and January.

EWA

EWA will acquire water upstream of the Delta in dryer years, and south of the Delta in wetter years. In wet conditions, such as those that occurred during water year 2000, the SWP fully utilizes its capacity; thus making it difficult to pump an additional 500 cfs for the EWA at all times from July through September. As SWP pumping reduces from 6,680 cfs, the reliability of the 500-cfs capacity increases. However, if the EWA plans on moving water between October and November, then it may be competing against other transfers for capacity.

The carriage water loss associated with the Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) transfer water is being evaluated.

A discussion followed regarding the filling of San Luis Reservoir. If San Luis Reservoir fills, the carryover is considered functional equivalent to the stored water as required in the EWA Operating Principles Agreement and cannot spill. Unfortunately, there weren't enough funds to acquire storage space.

It was requested that an EWA representative be present to discuss EWA.

Article 21 will be available when the state share of San Luis Reservoir fills in the base case. The allocation being low has a bearing on when San Luis Reservoir fills. A discussion of operational flexibility, Article 21 and PCWA followed.

The CALFED Ops Group Operations Briefing package showed: on page 5 - a 50% December forecast for the CVP; and on page 6 - the EWA Accounting Summary for the 50% Exceedence Hydrology. Information on the SWP forecast and the EWA Accounting Summary sheet for the 90% Exceedence Hydrology was missing.

Water Level Response Plan

The DWR and USBR met this month, identified areas of interest and are working on problems. The effects of installing equipment on a temporary basis are being evaluated. Other issues are not easily solvable such as incremental effects versus total effects. Once the Project Agencies finalize the Plan, the Management Agencies will review, and then the Plan will be given to Board as final.

Tier 3 Update

The Project Agencies are drafting a letter to the Management Agencies which will include the strategies of EWA and Tier 3. This letter still needs review and discussion from the Project Agencies. Tier 3 protocols will be shared with the Ops Group.

The Bay Institute and the Environmental Defense wrote a letter dated December 21, 2001 regarding Endangered Species Act Commitments for 2002.

Agenda Items For The Next Meeting

- Update on Tools
- Water Level Response Plan
- ESA assurances/Tier III
- Communication with Stakeholders